working as household workers in foreign countries, including a fixed wage that would have to be paid to them by their employers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is also proposing to establish shelters for distressed women migrants and offering legal services to ensure effective access to justice; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) The following policy measures have been taken for the Indian household services workers in foreign countries:

(i) Age restriction of 30 years has been applied to all women emigrants holding ECR passports;

(ii) Compulsory attestation by Indian Missions of Employment Contract has been applied to all women emigrants with ECR passports;

(iii) A Media campaign has been launched to educate potential women emigrants;

(iv) Indian Missions in major receiving countries have been advised to establish Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) to serve as a one-stop service outlet for emigrant workers;

(v) Regarding fixed wage for the Indian household workers abroad, minimum wages for various host countries have been fixed by the Indian Missions, which is enforced by the Protector of Emigrants while granting emigration clearance;

(c) and (d) The Indian Missions is major receiving countries have been asked to operate shelters for run-away female household service workers and to extend legal assistance to the Indian Emigrant workers.

Funds for strengthening PRIs

1104. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry has made an assessment that it required Rs. 4,000 crores for strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the assessment;

(c) whether any assessment has been made as to how much money is required for Andhra Pradesh to revamp its PRIs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether it is a fact that Andhra Pradesh Sarpanch Association has submitted 22 demands to him; and

(f) if so, the details of the demands and the action that has been taken for fulfilling those demands?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The effective implementation of Panchayati Raj requires that transfer of powers and

responsibilities to Panchayats in pursuance of the devolution of functions upon them should be matched by the concomitant transfer of funds and functionaries so as to ensure the effective performance of the transferred responsibilities. The funds transferred would include those in respect of schemes entrusted to the Panchayats for planning and implementation, block grants recommended for transfer to the Panchayats by the Central and State Finance Commissions and other united funds. The Ministry has been pursuing the obtaining of funds through loans and grants from external agencies in order to strengthen Panchayati Raj across the country. The Ministry has adopted a three pronged approach for supplementing the resources for the strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions:

(i) Funding and technical support for the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Schemes (PEAIS):

The PEAIS is sought to be implemented across the country as a national programme through which States that are able to show better performance in implementing Panchayati Raj and Panchayats at all levels that are able to show better performance in practising transparency and being accountable to citizens, would receive incentive grants. The performance of the States and Panchayats would be independently assessed using a devolution index developed for the purpose. The PEAIS is envisaged to be Government of India led funding support, to which the World Bank and other donors could provide supplementation with additional funds. World Bank and donor funding will be subsidiary to GOI funding. The PEAIS was approved for 2006-07 as a Central Sector Scheme for the Ministry of Panchyati Raj, with a total allocation of Rs. 10 crore. A proposal for enlarging the financial allocation of the existing PEAIS to about Rs. 4000 crore through obtaining funds from Central budgetary resources as well as the World Bank is under preparation.

(ii) States-specific budgetary and technical support for institutional strengthening and capacity building for Panchayats:

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is lending its support to proposals sent by States for fully implementing the empowerment and strengthening of Panchayats. A State specific project for Panchayat strengthening is under implementation in Karnataka. Proposals received from Kerala, West Bengal and Bihar have been formally forwarded to the World Bank and details of such State-specific projects for these States are now being worked out.

(iii) Technical Assistance

The Ministry has obtained approval for securing technical assistance from the World Bank, for Panchayati Raj related institutional reforms and action research.

(c) and (d) The requirement of funds strengthening Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh would depend upon the extent of devolution of functions to the Panchayats under the relevant Panchayati Raj Legislation and the activity mapping undertaken by the State concerned. Devolution of funds would also necessitate that each State Government includes a PRI component in its State budget, which indicates the allocation of funds to the Panchayats to match legislative devolution and activity mapping. Andhra Pradesh has committed that it would create a Panchayat sector in its budget in the financial year 2006-07 in the joint statement of conclusions signed between the Chief Minister and the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj in April 2006. The State has so far not undertaken this exercise.

The PEAIS scheme envisages that all States, including Andhra Pradesh would be eligible to receive funds under it, if it shows progress in respect of the criteria stated out in the devolution index.

(e) and (f) 26 demands have been listed in the charter of demands adopted by the local Government representatives of Andhra Pradesh on 6th January, 2007 in Hyderabad. The demands have been forwarded to the Government of Andhra Pradesh. One of the demands stands fulfilled with the constitution of District Planning Committees in Andhra Pradesh.

Posting of IAS/IPS Officers in Jharkhand

†1105. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the officers of Indian Administrative Service and Indian Police Service are posted in Jharkhand in consonance with the sanctioned posts;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the work of Government is not affected due to shortage of officers; and

(d) if so, the action being taken by Government to meet this shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) In Jharkhand Cadre, as on 1.1.2007, the total authorized strength of IAS officers was 143 posts against which 21 officers were in position. With a view to making more IAS officers available to States including Jharkhand, the Central Government has also decided to increase the intake of Direct recruit officers beginning this year. Besides, the Central Government has also determined 04 State Civil Services (SCS) 02 Non-SCS vacancies for the year 2007 for Jharkhand.

As on 1.1.2007, against the total authorized strength of 110 in IPS, the number of posts sanctioned for the State Government was 86 (excluding Central Deputation Reserve) against which 75 IPS officers were in position. In addition, 04 Direct Recruit IPS officers are expected to join the Cadre from the Civil Services Examination, 2006. Further, 15 more officers will be selected against the Promotion Quota (PQ) vacancies as per the procedure for filling up PQ posts. Filling up of the vacancies of the Promotion Quota is an ongoing process and the UPSC has been requested to expedite the same.

Conference of CIC and SIC

†1106. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a conference of Central Information Commission and State Information Commissions was held recently in Delhi;

(b) whether CIC has submitted its recommendation to Government;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.